

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

TOWN HALL RENOVATIONS PROJECT BUILDING COMMITTEE

December 2, 2014

Town Hall – Main Level Helen Nelson Conference Room

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

- I. Call to Order –the meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM by Chairperson Bongiovanni.
- II. Roll Call – Members present: Alan Bongiovanni, Chairperson; Jim Marocchini; Dave Nagel; Rodney Mortensen, Jane Murphy and Whit Przech. Others present: Members of the public; Sarah Jorgensen; John Salomone, Town Manager; Dave Langdon, Director of Facilities Management; Chuck Boos, David King, Brian Solywoda and Freddie Khericha, Kaestle Boos Associates; and Jeff Baron, Director of Administrative Services.
- III. Public Participation – Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive. The focus groups stressed communications. The date of this meeting is not shown on the Town's website. The Building Committee members are not listed. The agenda says that Kaestle Boos Associates will be making a presentation. Will they also be available to answer questions from the public?

Mady Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive. Kaestle Boos Associates will be making a presentation this evening. Will other architectural firms be making presentations at subsequent meetings?
- IV. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – Mr. Mortensen made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2014 meeting as presented. A second to the motion was made by Mr. Marocchini. The motion passed by a vote of 6 YES to 0 NO.
- V. Focus Groups Update – presented by Mr. Salomone. Next Tuesday the principals of Decision Point, who facilitated the focus groups, will be present at the Town Council meeting to answer any questions. If the Town Council has comments they want to emphasize, those comments will be transmitted to the Building Committee. An executive summary, prepared by Decision Point, will be in the packet distributed to the Town Council and will be shared with the Building Committee. There were a lot of different opinions on a lot of different matters. Each focus group had different themes and points of emphasis. There was also a phone survey that was taken shortly after the

referendum that mirrored the vote. That telephone survey was also addressed by the focus groups. Mr. Baron will distribute the results of that survey to the Building Committee.

- VI. Kaestle Boos Associates' Presentation and Discussion – Presented primarily by Mr. King. The purpose was to recap the proposal that was provided for the Sewptember referendum. Kaestle Boos Associates' more recent efforts regarding the Town Hall began with the boiler replacement project in 2007. This was followed by a physical building study and a space needs study. Kaestle Boos Associates' then developed a design for the Town Hall from which cost estimates were derived. Also in 2007 a Master Plan for Parks and Recreation was completed by another firm, which recommended a new Community Center. Some sections of this Master Plan are pertinent to the group and will be distributed to the Committee. There were also renovation projects at the Town Hall in 2009 (lower level) and 2011 (Transition Academy wing and additional lower level work). In 2012 they performed a campus master plan study with nine site options, including the potential straightening of Garfield Street. Schemes A through I of that study were given to the Committee. In 2013 there was an updated space needs study. Kaestle Boos Associates followed that space program in their subsequent design.

The Cromwell and West Hartford town halls were also designed by Kaestle Boos Associates and captured outdoor space. Kaestle Boos Associates looked at better organizing the Newington town hall departments and the space within each department. They changed the circulation pattern within the building. They looked at auditorium renovation for more of a multipurpose space as far back as 2007. In preparing the referendum proposal, they looked at various courtyard options, front entrance options, and site options.

Ms. Jorgensen noted that the upper parking lot was not part of the referendum money. It was to be paid for separately. Mr. Mortensen observed that the site renditions provided don't show the bus garage. Everything on the campus is intertwined. Moving the bus garage is not part of the Building Committee's charge. What is the bigger picture? He has heard about other Board of Education projects coming down the road. He requested guidance on the scope of the project. Mr. Bongiovanni replied that it is more defined in the Committee's charge than what the big picture is. The Committee can pollute the whole environment by trying to consider future items that may be coming down the road. Ms. Jorgensen stated that it might make sense to add a gym on to a school. This was part of a bigger picture that should be considered. Mr. Bongiovanni stated that the Committee can recommend work on other sites. Mr. Mortensen stated that would impact what the Committee does with this site. The previous Building Committee had plans without a bus garage. Mr. Baron interjected that the charge from the Town Council was to renovate the Town Hall and that Town Council members were appointed to the Committee whose role it is to keep an eye on the big picture and monitor developments of

the Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Bongiovanni felt the Building Committee will need a dialog with the Town Council and the Library Board regarding some collaborative effort there concerning the land purchased by the library and parking issues. He hopes that all parties can work together for a common goal. The Committee needs to determine its potential, namely, is there space to accommodate the needs of the Boards of Education and Parks & Recreation on the property?

Mr. King recommended a review of the space needs study, which is now two years old. He felt it was important to re-establish that. He was asked about the structural foundation of the gym and if it could be rehabilitated without demolishing huge sections of the building. He responded that the gym is a problem. It needs to be replaced. In addition to problems with the floor the outside wall is bowing outward and needs to be replaced. It is the toughest spot in the building to correct.

Mr. Bongiovanni asked how creative Kaestle Boos Associates can be in developing a new design. Mr. King responded that his firm had looked the Town Hall in many different iterations. As architects, they know that when things change, solutions change. Mr. Mortensen asked about renovating in place as opposed to starting from scratch and completely rebuilding. Mr. King responded that looking at a new building was done in 2007. That was more of a cost examination, new versus renovation in terms of cost. Now, the Building Committee may need a little bit of both. It will take longer to do the work, but it is feasible. Mr. Bongiovanni asked about costs per square foot for the Town Hall. Mr. King responded that the costs developed for the last project were pretty good. There are offices, vaults and assembly space. Some costs are going up in the construction industry.

Mr. Mortensen asked if the life span for a brand new building versus a renovated building would be equal. Mr. King replied that yes, it would because of the extensiveness of the renovations that were needed. Mr. Bongiovanni asked about energy efficiencies. Mr. King replied that they were looked at closely. The options were examined versus their cost. They looked at solar but it was not included due to the cost. Mr. Bongiovanni asked if it would take longer to build new or to renovate. Mr. King responded that some departments may have to be moved even in renovation. It would be about the same. Mr. Przech asked if Kaestle Boos Associates would be willing to move forward on the process of developing a new design and if they would charge a fee. Mr. King replied that Kaestle Boos Associates was willing to move forward on the project with the Committee at no additional cost.

- VII. Any Other Business Pertinent to the Committee – The Committee viewed the one set of pictures of the West Hartford and Cromwell Town Hall provided by Kaestle Boos Associates. Mr. Marocchini stated his belief that the Committee can fit Town offices in the space available. The big thing seems to be how

much space, if any, does the Community Center need? The other issue is parking. The problem primarily is fitting the needs of the Community Center within the space available to the Committee. Mr. Nagel cautioned about the need to be careful not to impose things the Building Committee doesn't have control over. The Committee can only deal with what it has. It will be overstepping its bounds if it is looking at things beyond its control. Mr. Bongiovanni felt the library can be approached about parking and should be approached early on. It is his understanding there may have been informal talks, but no resolution.

Mr. Mortensen expressed the need to remain flexible. A collaborative effort may come about. This is the time to open or close doors with others. The Committee needs to look at every possibility to get the best bang for the buck for the Town. The Committee wants to include everybody. Mr. Baron was directed to invite the library board and/or their designated representatives to a future meeting to discuss what space could be used, if any. Mr. Marocchini inquired how long it would take to revisit the Town Hall space needs. Mr. King responded that it would be a couple of weeks normally but, given the holidays, it would take until the end of the month.

The Committee agreed to hold its next meeting on December 15th at 7:00 PM and to include an agenda item on retaining Kaestle Boos Associates as the project architect. It also agreed to hold its following meeting on January 6th at 6:30 PM, and to invite the Library Board as a whole and/or its designated representatives to that meeting.

Ms. Murphy inquired about the cost of the industrial hygienist that was requested at the previous meeting. Mr. Langdon responded that there was report completed in 2007 by EnviroSafe. It had estimates, but they were in 2007 dollars. There would be considerable remediation in the building. If the firm that does the estimating for the project were to develop an estimate, it would just be an add-on for the project. Otherwise it would be about \$36,000 to have another company perform a new study. The Committee agreed that should not be necessary. The Town's Comprehensive Plan of Development was distributed previously to the Committee. Mr. Bongiovanni mentioned that he can make available the pages that pertain to the Committee's work if anyone needs them.

- VIII. Public Participation – Roy Zartarian, 25 Stuart Street. It is encouraging to see the Committee opening doors of communication as part of their process. He encouraged the Committee to consider another asset that is also part of the campus, the Senior and Disabled Center. Consider asking them to the table early on also. They may be looking to expand as well.

Gail Budrejko, 21 Isabelle Terrace. She was glad to hear about the executive summary for the focus groups report. The summary should have been an

addendum to the report. They should be instructed not to waste time on the process. They should be asked to present logical groupings and themes, and the numbers that would support the analysis. They should identify areas of confusion, agreement, disagreement and items of note. The facilitators heard both the tone and the comments, they should point out the items to look at more closely. They should isolate comments and ideas pertinent to the Building Committee and other Town officials. She hopes the executive summary won't cost any more money.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive. She is hearing the same discussions she has heard before. The library land was part of earlier schemes. It boggles her mind another space needs study is being done. Where did the direction come for all these studies? The Master Plan for Parks and Recreation was done in 2007. It stated that it would be ideal for a new Parks and Recreation building. Olsen Design Architects gave Lee Olsen's opinions on the Parks and Recreation building in the 2012 feasibility study. Nine schemes were mentioned earlier by the architect, although she only saw eight schemes. She hopes the Building Committee is getting the same information as the other Building Committees. There was talk about a grant for the Garfield Street relocation that eventually became site planning. The Committee is going round and round and needs to talk to somebody.

Mady Kenny, 52 Crestview Drive. She felt the audio system worked well. The Committee won't be effective if it doesn't know what the plans are in other areas. This is very important. The public needs copies of handouts. Will the Committee be staying with the architect or will it see what others have? She was assured previously that others would be considered. Has this Building Committee decided or will it seek other ideas?

Steven Silvia, 45 Basswood Street. He likes the Committee's dialog and its inclusion. He advises that the Board of Education be engaged. He hears that they have long range capital improvement plans. He would also like to share a couple of pieces of information. Current design standards are 200 square feet per person. Kaestle Boos Associates designed to a standard. The standard that had been 240 square feet for offices is now 180 square feet. The standard that was 180 square feet is now 120 square feet. There are only 134 individuals. There is sufficient space to meet the needs identified. 8,000 square feet, 20% of building demand, is for storage. This is not acceptable in the corporate world. Walls can be knocked down to create shared space. He would recommend that the Building Committee put in a space objective, as Aetna and The Hartford have done. A recent renovations project came in at \$78 per square foot. There were hard decisions that had to be made. The Committee has the space in this building. He is offering his architectural/engineering services to the Town for free. On the gym, he is aware of a similar situation where the floor was removed, raising the height of

the ceiling, and a new slab on grade was poured. That would be more cost effective.

- IX. Response to Public Participation – The Chair asked Mr. Baron to post the names and addresses of the Committee members, as well as the minutes and the agendas of the Committee, on the Town’s website. On the selection of an architect, no determination has been made yet. The Committee will look at what Kaestle Boos has done and evaluate it. The Committee will talk about it in two weeks. Regarding the Senior and Disabled Center, he agreed that the Committee should speak with them. Mr. Nagel, as Town Council liaison to the Commission on Aging, reported that they have no plans to expand at this time, although he felt it might be good to invite them in. Mr. Mortensen stated that he did not want to leave any stone unturned, that the Committee should reach out to them, and send copies of the minutes and agendas to them. Mr. Baron will contact the Center’s Director, to see if it would be more appropriate to forward minutes and agendas to her or to the Commission as a whole. Mr. Nagel will share information on the Building Committee at the next Commission meeting.

On the focus group executive summary, Mr. Bongiovanni felt that the Town Manager would request the appropriate level of detail. He agreed that the facilitator should highlight those things that were mentioned more often. He will speak with the Town Manager about the executive summary. On the space needs, the Committee was just looking to update the last effort, not for a whole new study. Ms. Jorgensen felt the Committee should notify whoever updates the study that the request for office lunch areas will not be accommodated. The Chair noted that there has been a lot of information to look at. The Committee will do its best to keep up with their reading of the prior Building Committee’s documents. He also stated that while he has worked with Kaestle Boos Associates on other projects, he is a land surveyor who has worked with a great many architectural and engineering firms all across the state. He works with these firms, not for them. As a result, there is no conflict of interest. He has not made up his mind on who the architect should be. Regarding Board of Education involvement, the Chair felt that after the Building Committee meets with the Library Board, it would meet with the Board of Education. Regarding the needs analysis, he read that in great detail. He recognizes that there are things that are needed versus things that are wanted. There are some generalities. There are some areas that may be larger than necessary. There is also a lot of vault space, public meeting rooms that are needed, etc.

- X. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeff Baron
Director of Administrative Services